

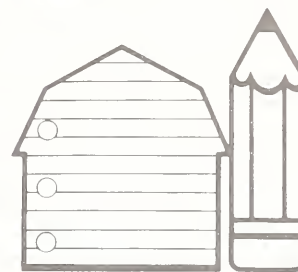
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



May 1987
Vol. 2, No. 3

A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

4-H and Ag in the Classroom Join Hands

They've been allies in agriculture, sharing and comparing notes for many years. But it's just the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Cooperation between 4-H and Ag in the Classroom makes great sense. Both programs aim to enrich today's youth with a working knowledge of the vital role agriculture plays in all of our lives. Here's a sampling of what some state 4-H leaders and volunteers have been doing to promote that

all-important subject, and increase the cooperation between 4-H and Ag in the Classroom.

Georgia's "Seeds to Supper" Puts Knowledge on the Table

Peggy Adkins, Extension 4-H specialist and member of the Georgia Ag in the Classroom Task

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Bill Fink, Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Specialist, New York City, introduces young people to 4-H's "Farming the Sea" program.

What Is 4-H?



Head, Heart, Hands and Health . . . these are the four H's. "To make the best better" . . . this is the spirit behind 4-H.

Founded in 1914, 4-H is an informal youth education program of the Cooperative Extension System. With its distinguished tradition of using agricultural subject matter to help youth develop life skills, 4-H has enriched the lives of over 40 million children from the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam.

Open to all interested youth, 4-H is conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state land grant universities and county governments. It combines the work of federal, state and local Extension staff and volunteer leaders.

Today, approximately 5 million boys and girls involved in 4-H are benefiting from the support of nearly 600 thousand volunteer leaders. In every county across the nation, these students are watching eggs hatch, taking trips to farms, baking bread and planting gardens. They're learning about agriculture, and they're becoming better citizens—that is 4-H.



From the Director

Dear Readers:

As you know, the success of Ag In the Classroom has been rooted in your willingness to share information and ideas. Ag In The Classroom Notes, our bi-monthly newsletter, was created to facilitate this sharing.

Countless teachers and students have benefited from Ag In The Classroom Notes. They have discovered resources and lesson ideas that otherwise would have never passed through their classroom doors. Let's get this information flowing.

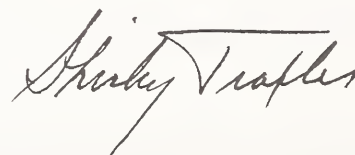
I encourage you to take full advantage of Ag In The Classroom Notes. If you have stories, ideas or announcements related to bringing agriculture into the classroom, please let us know. We welcome leads and information in all forms:

- phone calls
- letters
- photographs
- fact sheets
- teaching resources
- press clippings
- news releases
- completed articles

Our staff is standing by ready to follow up on your leads and help shape your contributions into story-form.

Write to me at: 234-W USDA
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Or call: 202/447-5727

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler

P.S. Also, please include the National Ag in the Classroom office on your mailing list.

4-H and Ag

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Force, is rightfully proud of her 4-H "Seeds to Supper" workbook. 65,000 4th grade students use the workbook each year to learn about the state's biggest industry. Chapters include "Pick a Pack of Peanuts," "A Day on the Farm," and "Six Stops over Georgia." Ag in the Classroom has been using this informative resource in many of its workshops.

Commenting on the partnership between Ag in the Classroom and 4-H, Adkins said, "We found each other; it's really a healthy relationship. In fact, the whole Department of Education, the USDA, and many local communities have been working together to make agricultural education a success." She added, "Teachers should take advantage of everything Extension people have to offer."

Kansas — "Egg in the Classroom" Hatches Fascination

Kansas 4-H leader and Ag in the Classroom state contact Steve Fisher has a lot of 4-H enrichment programs to promote these days, and he finds Ag in the Classroom makes his work easier. "I see it as a tremendous partnership. We're all working towards the same goal, and we're constantly exchanging creative ideas."

Fisher said the most popular 4-H program is chick embryology. This program allows children to observe incubating eggs and hatching chicks in special see-through incubators. "Teachers report that classroom attendance is always high during those three weeks," he said, "and it often remains high afterwards."

Other Kansas 4-H resources are the Wheat

Science Kit, which includes a slide/tape presentation, a teacher's guide and ingredients for baking bread in the classroom; and a step-by-step manual titled "Raising Vegetables and Minigardens."

Missouri — 4-H Shows 'Em the Farm

"'Agriculture and You' is one of the 4-H lesson plans we've developed to give 5th and 6th grade Missouri students a comprehensive understanding of agriculture," said state 4-H youth specialist Max Miller.

This program begins with a four-day overview of Missouri's farming industry. Guest speakers are often invited to the classroom to share their knowledge and answer students' questions. On the fifth day, the students go to a local farm where they take a complete "show me" tour.

"Agriculture and You" offers Missouri teachers supporting material like slides and tapes, seed samples and posters. Miller advises, "Educators should keep in mind that teaching agriculture is just as important to children living in farm areas. In many cases, their parents are not in farming, and they don't know as much as they could about agriculture."

In addition to his 4-H work, Miller has been distributing Ag in the Classroom materials across the state. Of 4-H's relationship with Ag in the Classroom, Miller said, "We definitely complement each other, and I enjoy being a part of both programs. It's the best way to spread the agriculture story."

New York — 4-H Helps Build Ag Education Empire

In 1986, over 350,000 New York students partici-

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Spotlight

Spotlight on Washington State's Marie Snyder

"If school faculties or groups don't understand the purpose of Agriculture in the Classroom, I go to their meetings and give them the old gung-ho!" says retired schoolteacher Marie Snyder.

Snyder certainly has a lot of gung-ho to offer her state's teachers and students. In addition to running a Washtucna, Washington, grain and cattle farm with her husband, Les, Snyder has been promoting agricultural awareness and education in every corner of the state, in every way she can.

As vice chairperson and former president of the Washington Agricultural Awareness Council, Marie has also successfully solicited money for scholarships to send teachers to a one-week, two-credit agriculture training workshop. The workshop, held every summer at Washington State University at Pullman, helps K-12th grade teachers gain confidence in teaching about the state's number one industry.

"Last year, I asked the Washington State Wheat Association to sponsor teachers, and it was a great success," she said. "This year, I'm soliciting scholarships from each Pomona Grange. Some are already sending two teachers, and I expect just about every county to be represented. The response to this program really makes me feel good."

Snyder, no doubt, makes everyone she meets feel good. Says Washington state Ag in the Classroom contact Julie Sandberg, "She's been tremendous. Marie has devoted an incredible amount of her personal time spreading the word about agriculture and encouraging teachers to attend workshops. Marie has been a great liaison between the agriculture industry and education."

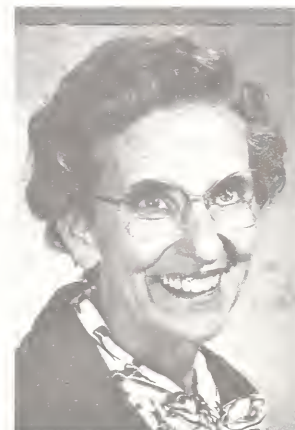
When Snyder isn't raising money to send teachers to school, she's either explaining Ag in the Classroom at a faculty meeting, hosting a city family on her farm for a weekend, staffing exhibits

at county and state fairs, or holding her own ag-ed seminar for local school districts. "When it comes to promoting agriculture," Snyder says, "my goal is to shake everyone up and make them get with it!"

Her advice to other teachers: "There's no limit to the creative and innovative things you can do when teaching agriculture. I know a teacher who had her students plant wheat. She showed them how to grind the wheat and bake loaves of bread - all in the classroom! The students then turned around and sold the bread. It was a little classroom agribusiness operation, designed to show students the economics of it all!"

"If you try something like this, other teachers down the hall become interested. Teaching agriculture is contagious."

Snyder's commitment to ag-ed stems from her view of agriculture's importance to the nation. "I



Marie Snyder

"When it comes to promoting agriculture, my goal is to shake everyone up and make them get with it!"

—Marie Snyder

love the soil and I think it's important for everyone to know about the use of conservation practices and where food comes from. If we didn't have agriculture, we wouldn't have a country. It's up to us to do the producing and to teach this tradition to future generations."

Note: In recognition of her enthusiastic support of agricultural education, Washington State's FFA chapter has recently selected Snyder as Honorary Washington State Farmer of the Year. A formal presentation will be held at the FFA state convention in June.

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pated in agriculture-oriented 4-H school enrichment programs, according to Bill Umscheid, 4-H youth development program specialist at Cornell University. "These students have been exposed to a variety of areas, including nutrition, chick embryology, plant science and natural resources," he said. "Students living near the coast have had the unique opportunity to study marine life with the Farming the Sea project. 4-H has been helping deliver these programs in New York state for nearly 25 years.

"With this background," he continued, "it's easy to see why county 4-H programs in New York have expressed a high degree of interest in Ag in the Classroom." To further agriculture education efforts, Umscheid said 37 of the 62 county 4-H programs in New York plan to join forces with Ag in the Classroom, the State Education Department, the New York Farm Bureau and Cornell University.

Umscheid noted, "From rural western New York, to suburban Long Island, to urban Buffalo and New York City, there's a perfect match between the programs of 4-H and Ag in the Classroom."



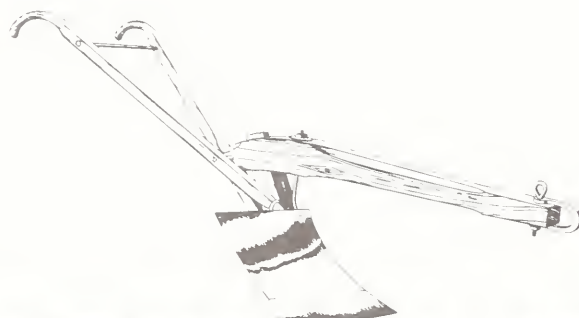
The leaping deer trademarks, above, represent Deere & Company's 150 year tradition of leadership. John Deere's first steel plow, right, was known as "the plow that broke the prairies."

The "General Purpose" tractor of 1928-1936, right, and today's automatic front wheel drive tractor, far right.

John Deere Unearths New Resources!

In 1837, an innovative young blacksmith named John Deere forged the first successful steel plow. Ever since that year, the name John Deere has been an integral part of American culture. To commemorate its 150th birthday, Deere & Company is offering a complimentary selection of historical artwork and photographs, and a free teacher's guide.

John Deere Graphics is a catalog collection of almost 200 illustrations depicting early tractors, farmers working on the field, and related scenes.

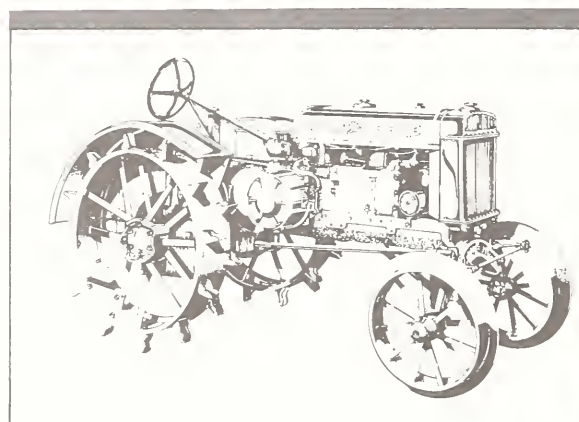


Teachers can order individual photographs and artwork from this catalog.

Life on the Prairie, an educational package and teacher's guide, has been developed to provide students with an historical perspective of farming and the role of agriculture in America. Its activities allow students to explore the lives of pioneers through reading, dictionary work, creative writing, drawing and research. The guide is geared toward grades 3 through 8.

To order the *John Deere Graphics* catalog and *Life on the Prairie*, contact John F. Coy, Deere & Company, John Deere Road, Moline, Illinois 61265-8098. (309) 752-4540.

Note: Lucky teachers in the Northern Illinois area have another resource: the John Deere Historic Site, a mid-19th century prairie village located in Grand Detour, Illinois. For information on scheduling a field trip, contact Deere Historic Site, 8393 South Main, Grand Detour, Dixon, Illinois 61021. (815) 652-4551.



Georgia Task Force Wins Award

The Georgia Ag in the Classroom Task Force was recently honored for its efforts to involve hundreds of educators, community members and volunteers in an innovative education program. The "Community Involvement Award," which was presented by the Georgia Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, recognizes the quality of work behind the task force's three-tier teacher training program.

According to Louise Hill, Georgia Farm Bureau Federation staff member and task force secretary, the success of the teaching plan was due to the enthusiasm and hard work of many people. "The task force's commitment has reached all levels — from agriculture and education leaders, to teachers, and to various community members. It has been an exciting network of contact for all involved."

The three-tier teaching plan was developed to ensure the best use by teachers of *Agriculture in Georgia Classrooms*, an extensive K-4 resource guide. Training was viewed as the foundation of the

program. The three-tier training plan was basically a "trickle down" series of workshops which began at a state meeting, and then spread to regional and local levels. (See *Ag in the Classroom Notes*, November 1986.)

Alice Smith of the Georgia Department of Education explained, "The workshops have been as comprehensive as the curriculum resource guide. We're orienting teachers to a broader view of agriculture - its historic significance and its relationship to human needs, the environment and the economy."

Smith witnessed the program's award-winning community involvement first hand. "It's been amazing," she said. "Businesses, farmers and educational institutions helped us from the beginning. Teachers, in turn, wanted to get the materials as soon as they could to 'plan activities for Monday morning.' Even principals and administrators who attended the workshops said they couldn't have used their time in a better way."

As Ag in the Classroom activities continue to expand, regional conferences offer states a way to exchange their growing stockpiles of information. Three such conferences recently gave 19 states an opportunity to compare notes.

Central Region

Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska were represented by 10 participants at the first Central Regional Conference on April 1 in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Prior to the conference, promotional and instructional materials were exchanged, as well as funding and organizational information about the four states. Participants discussed the materials, in addition to teacher training and state support. "We all have something different right now that we can share," said Ellen Hellerich, curriculum coordinator of Nebraska Ag in the Classroom. "We understand now where each state is coming from."

Besides discussing their individual programs, the states came up with ways to work together. Nebraska and Kansas, for example will join forces to produce a teacher's unit for use in the summer training courses. Also in the idea stage is a joint video project on commodities that all four states have in common.

"Joint ventures" will be the subject of the next central regional conference, to be held in October in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Western Region

California's Western Regional Conference, held on March 5-7, drew 160 participants from Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, and New Mexico, as well as representatives from Illinois, Iowa, Florida and Washington, D.C. The three-day event featured mini-sessions on such

programs as Adopt a Classroom, Incubator in the Classroom, 4-H projects, and Farm Day. Workshops were held on teacher training, fundraising and resource materials development.

The finale of the conference was the production of "My Farm Book," a 60-minute musical performed by 90 San Joaquin County third and fourth graders. Adapted from a California Women for Agriculture project by teachers Carol Dinkel, Jane Bange and Rebecca Napoleon, the project began as the annual third grade production at Lakewood School in Lodi, California.

Idaho will host the 1988 Western Regional Conference.

Northeastern Region

The New England states met for the second time as New Hampshire hosted the Northeastern Regional Conference on March 12-13. About 35 representatives from Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Hampshire were in attendance.

The states continued working on the charter for the New England-New York Consortium, which they plan to ratify at the national conference in June. This consortium will help unify the region's ag-ed efforts. After individual states reported on their recent activities, the conference broke up into five committees which covered such areas as teacher training, curriculum development, public relations, funding and organizational structure. The five committees had been established via teleconference in December.

Bill Annis, a member of New Hampshire's Ag in the Classroom Advisory Committee, explained the cooperative spirit of the northeastern states. "If you look at land mass, we're a small area. We're better off working together and pooling our efforts."

Farmers and Volunteers Learn How to Teach

The cute little piggy that causes such a stir when it visits your classroom is probably tucked under the arm of a farmer who wants to communicate effectively with your students.

The Mercer County Agricultural Development Council in Mercer, Pennsylvania, sponsored a volunteer training program on February 25 to teach farmers and other volunteers how to reach students with their message about agriculture. Farmers, farm wives and representatives of the Pennsylvania Council on Economic Education gathered to discuss such topics as "What Teachers Expect of You," "Ideas that Reach Elementary Students," and "How to Make Contact with Schools."

"When funding became impossible for field trips, classroom visits became an alternative," explains Carol Ann Gregg, the Ag in the Classroom consul-

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Students milking "Farm Day" for all its' worth in Pennsylvania's Lakeview school district. Thanks to volunteer efforts of local farmers and agri-businesses, the cow (left) and other farm animals make regular visits to elementary schools.

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tant for the Pennsylvania Council on Economic Education.

"Nothing attracts attention more than an animal in a city school," said Don Unangst, staff member of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and member of the Agricultural Development Council.

A resource guide was given to the meeting's participants to familiarize them with the teacher's materials. Potential classroom problems were discussed, such as how to handle students talking during presentations. "The kids are so interested there's never a big problem," said Gregg. Volun-

teers visit the primary grades because they feel more comfortable working with young children, Gregg explained.

The farmer-volunteers seem to get as much out of the school visits as the students. Gregg related the story of one couple who, after visiting the classroom, brought the students to their farm for a first-hand look. The couple even provided transportation with their own bus!

Unangst and Gregg visit school superintendents regularly to make them aware of the farmer-volunteers. "The superintendents open their doors pretty wide," said Unangst.

"Mike," "Muffy" and Alabama Students Hunt for Treasures

Two colorful characters named Mike and Muffy will take Alabama students on a treasure hunt next fall, and lead them right to their own backyard. "Alabama Treasures," a teacher's guide developed for the Alabama Ag in the Classroom Committee by the State Department of Education, helps kindergarten through third graders understand and appreciate their state's most treasured resource—agriculture.

The big green binder full of drawings, ideas, and projects was developed by the Department of Education's Barbara McMillan, executive director of the Alabama State Course of Study, and Jacquelyn Autrey and Rosemary Mobley, early childhood specialists. McMillan, the project's coordinator, explained that the guide is aimed at the primary grades for two reasons. "At that age, children are very curious about the world around them and they're very eager to learn," according to McMillan. In addition, teachers in the primary grades are "very receptive to new ideas."

With stories, pictures and puppet shows, children may not even know they're learning as they follow Mike and Muffy along on the treasure hunt.

The characters visit many different farms in search of treasure, and with the help of a friendly computer, "Mr. Alvin," learn about each farm along the way. Mike and Muffy discover that the farms they've been visiting are in fact the "treasure" they've been seeking, and students learn about the agricultural wealth of their own state.

The teacher's guide contains all the information needed to make Mike and Muffy puppets, a cardboard Mr. Alvin, a treasure map, and other things to enhance the learning process. "An important aspect of the workbook activities," says Alabama Ag in the Classroom chairman Jane Alice Lee, "is that they are done with materials that teachers have available."

Many talents were pooled to produce "Alabama's Treasures." In addition to McMillan, Autrey and Mobley, the Department of Education's Alvin Halcomb provided information for the guide and became the inspiration for Mr. Alvin. Alabama vocational education schools used scrap wood to make the cars used on the treasure map, and the University of Alabama typography lab produced a map of the state.

Four workshops, drawing members from 60-65 school systems, will train teachers in city and county schools to work with the new guides. Volunteers from farm women's organizations will also be recruited this summer to become familiar with the materials. Lee hopes that the workshops will draw teachers who will return to their schools and pass along the information gained at the workshops to their fellow teachers.

Over 200 copies of "Alabama's Treasures" will be in the classrooms by fall. Some private schools will also have the guide. "We will make this material as available as our resources will allow us to," said Lee.

Lee sees many advantages in "Alabama Treasures." Besides helping the students learn more about their state, "parents are going to learn some too," she insists.

Mike and Muffy will be at the national Ag in the Classroom conference in June, along with their creators, as part of a roundtable discussion.

Mike and Muffy take a break from their treasure hunt to help a timber farmer with his crop.



Another Kind of Food Group?

Iowa elementary school students will soon meet their state's agricultural products face to face. The Iowa Department of Education recently purchased food costumes (below) to use in a nutrition education program. The department is currently developing skits that will focus on the basic food groups and nutritional information of each item. An adventurous five-person team will perform the skits across the state. Educators expect this to be a very popular course.



Students "Byte" into Soil and Water Conservation

Nebraska upper elementary and middle school students now have the opportunity to study one of today's hottest topics in agriculture with *Farm & Food Bytes—Soil and Water Conversation*, new software developed by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.

Clark Holthaus, Social Science and Math teacher at Champion Grade School, Champion, Nebraska, acquired a copy of the program from a local Pioneer sales representative. Holthaus recently introduced the new package to his 5th through 8th grade students. He said they took an immediate liking to the program. *Farm and Food Bytes* teaches students new facts in a challenging, interesting way. It really holds their attention. Often 10-year-olds ask, 'Can't we do something else now?' But when they started working on this program, they didn't want to quit!"

Farm & Food Bytes — Soil and Water Conversation is designed in the same format as the introductory *Farm & Food Bytes* package. (See *Ag in the Classroom Notes*, September 1986.) Its materials can be easily tied to existing math, science, social studies and language arts classes.

Exercises include spelling conservation-related terms like "erosion," "topsoil," and "terraces," and

lessons on how soil is formed. There is also an agricultural game section, "Take A Voyage In The Soil."

Varying skill levels within the program allow students to progress from simple to more difficult tasks as they learn about agricultural conservation and computers. The software can also be developed into localized versions, featuring towns, cities, waterways and conservation concerns of particular states.

Packaged in an attractive 3-ring notebook, the complete set of lesson materials includes:

- the *Farm & Food Bytes Soil and Water Conservation* computer program
- a teacher's guide
- a student workbook

Retailing for \$29.00, the program runs on Apple computers, and will soon be available for IBM-compatibles.

Teachers may preview *Farm & Food Bytes — Soil and Water Conservation* for 30 days at no cost. If you would like a copy, or want additional information, contact Linda Arnold, Agri-Education, Inc., 815 Shakespeare, Stratford, Iowa 50249, (515) 838-2785.

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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